

MADAM CHAIR CLARK AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

My name is Douglas Grand from Missoula, Montana. I have two concerns that I would like to talk to you about today.

The first concern is that I have long been aware that the caregivers who provide services to clients like myself either have no insurance or have to take a second job to pay medical bills or to afford medical insurance. I feel they deserve the opportunity to be cared for in the same aspect that they care for their clients. Any consideration and effort that you could make to offer them affordable and optional insurance is a must in order to keep these caregivers able to ~~stay~~ in this employment.

The second concern I would like to address is the Medicaid spenddown issue. I have been a resident at Bee Hive Homes over the past five years. I have now reached the point where my medical situation will physically allow me be able to get out on my own. Because of the Medicaid spenddown, I am tied to the fact that even with doing some work to make wages besides the Social Security I receive, I am not allowed the opportunity to get ahead in order to accomplish this goal. I am only allowed to keep \$545 a month to plan for rent, utilities, phone, co-pays, transportation, groceries and miscellaneous. Also any raise in the social security is also added to the spenddown once again keeping the allowable amount at \$545 per month.

I understand that because of high medical expenses, when care is needed, the majority of the extra monies should probably go to the medical spenddown but it seems to me that a small percentage should come back to the client. This would help with an incentive to reach the goal of being independent and become a tax-paying citizen again.